



## Narratives and Learning Toward Sustainable Futures

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- We constantly receive data input through our senses that
  - triggers our rapid (system 1) or
  - leads to slower cognitive (system 2) responses
- Input from the complex, multi-dimensional real world
- How do we make meaning of this complex input?
- Social identities, culture/context, and norms modulate our processing of the input
- Stories, frames, memes, metaphors, narratives are forms that give voice to our visions and identities

- Narratives help us to
  - Decide what we should pay attention to in the complex real world (i.e., what is the system of interest)?
  - Filter and structure the constant stream of input
  - Reduce the high dimensional complexity of real world systems to forms we can hold in memory and communicate easily
  - Establish, reinforce and maintain culture and group identities
  - Provide a platform for decision making on community or group issues of importance to them

# Narratives and consequences of complexity

- Narratives may be expressed in various formats to enhance their resonance in different contexts and cultures - e.g., dance, music, theater, sculpture, images
- Condensed affective narrative expressions (CANEs) sometimes become proxies for extended discourses



Cassie Meador's  
choreography *Drift*

# Tales and Rituals: Learning From Narrative Expressions



Village in Chizu, Japan (above)



Majia Indigenous Township, Taiwan



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## And some more questions about narratives



- Do the dramatic elements of narratives enhance their holistic impact on cognition and emotion?
- How can we learn more about the unexpressed backstories - the linked implicit narratives - and their basis in tacit biases, beliefs, and values?
- Will greater insights into underlying motivation for narratives help us get past the technological arms race of misinformation and conspiracy theories vs. fact checking and detecting fakes and deep fakes?